

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Before another paper reaches our readers Conference will be in session. We trust many of our people will be present and enjoy the blessings that come from fellowship one with another. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit may direct the affairs of the Conference in a way that will redound to the glory of God and do honor to the Brethren church.

INNER TRUTH

The cry of the Psalmist for "truth in the inner parts" has been uttered by every real man whose spirit has come in contact with the divine spirit. The absolutely sincere man is the strong, true man, upon whom every one relies. To be less than sincere, to be less than true at the core, to allow any degree of severance between what we appear to be and what we really are, to clothe the exterior life with an exuberant verbiage which has feeble roots, or none at all, in the heart, represents a state of things more or less perverse, and more or less contemptible according to the varying degrees of duplicity. When in common parlance we say that we have "found him out," we mean that we have discovered, at least in some respects, the divergence between the man's *show* life and his *real* life. Let it be for example a member of the church, a professor of religion. We expect such a man to be honest; but in a transaction where he felt secure from detection, we find that he is dishonest. We expect him to be truthful; but the temptation of self interest betrays him into prevarication. We expect him to be pure; but in certain company we catch him enjoying obscene stories. In some company he talks like an angel, but in other situations he trades like a sharper. He lives a double life, and it is one of the remarkable characteristics of that kind that it seems to be totally unconscious of the divine scrutiny.

Insincerity is a disease of the nature rather than a voluntary perversity, and this perhaps accounts for the unreason, the insanity of the thing. Perhaps many a man who is conscious of the cancer would like to get rid of it, but the cancer is there nevertheless. Heaven knows it from the beginning, and eventually men know it, and forever after the victim is a marked man among men, his physical, or his moral health, as the case may be, hopelessly mortgaged, and his reputation utterly bankrupted. Had the malady been taken in hand in its incipency there might have been a cure, but now, tho all things are possible with God, all things are not

possible with men, and many things that are even possible are not probable. When a habit of insincerity becomes confirmed by long years of sufferance, if not of positive cultivation, hope of reform retires very nearly to the limits of the impossible.

Every man who is honest with himself, and thoroughly in earnest with himself, will find, the more he searches, what a vast problem confronts him in the facts, tendencies, perils and possibilities of his inner life, the life at which God looks. Here is where he is either hero or coward, man or manikin, victor or vanquished. Appalled by the gigantic task, the long struggle, the infinite pain of ordering, rectifying and purifying this inner life, men weakly yielded to the fatal suggestion that it is easier to *seem* than to *be*, tho the seeming is only in the sight of men, and that for a limited space, ending in confusion and shame. Soundness of mind is said to be one of the chief characteristics, or fruits, of grace in the heart, and perhaps the most conspicuous proof of soundness of mind is the elimination of all shams. Great deliverance, and great power, and great joy comes to the man who realizes in his experience this vital rectification of his nature. Then may he know that he is in the way of salvation, for one of the ultimate features of salvation will be a perfect transparency of character, in which much of the joy and dignity of the redeemed man will consist in the fact that his inner heart and inner life will be open to the admiring gaze of men and angels, like some celestial temple of surpassing beauty, illuminated with the glory of God's majesty and presence.

IS IT TRUE?

Ingersoll said that every act, be it good or evil, was but condition's fruit. Is this true? Could he, could any sane man say that there were no acts which are the fruit of intention? If every act is the fruit of blind condition (and he clearly sets forth this theory in the same paragraph by saying that the base and vile are victims of the blind) then there is no such thing as vice and no such thing as virtue. The moral quality of every act lies in the intention. Free will is the basis of individual, moral responsibility. True there is a mixture of liberty and necessity in the psychological forces behind every act, but in the case of every sane man or woman there is enough of the element of deliberate choice in the act, enough of the power to refrain from it, to bring in its train a solemn weight of responsibility.